

(TMI Newsletter – October 2014)

GLIDING ADVENTURES

Growing up with Bob - Part 2

By Maria Monroe Whitehead
Vice President of Monroe Products

WURTSBORO, NEW YORK

Among his many interests, gliding was a beloved pastime for Bob Monroe. He was an accredited pilot, and would often escape to Wurtsboro Airport with my sister and me for an afternoon of sailing through the air in an engine-less plane.



©2013 Monroe Products. All rights reserved.

The first known owner and operator of the Wurtsboro Airport was Lee Lord, who gave flying lessons in the 1920-30s. The airport was later bought by Anthony Barone, Sr. and his wife, Theresa, in the 1940s, who kept it a family business for many years. Many private clients from New York City, including the late Christopher Reeve, used to fly gliders out of the airport.

I remember my first time in the glider as if it were yesterday. I was scared! At only eight years old, I couldn't imagine how a plane could fly without an engine. Laurie, my ever-brave little sister, was undaunted at the prospect. Yet Mother had allowed us to go, and with complete and utter trust in Daddy.

I climbed into the plane and settled into the passenger seat with Laurie next to me. We were both tiny and weighed under the limit, so we were both strapped in as one. Bob then got into the pilot seat and buckled up. We were then attached to the tow plane with a heavy chain.

The next thing I knew, we were moving slowly onto the runway. We were jostled around a bit, as it was bumpy...but then in an instant we were airborne. As our altitude increased, I was in awe of the view. Beautiful autumn colors covered the mountains and fields below. I was enthralled.

Then it dawned on me. This was how it was done ... the glider did not have an engine, but the tow plane did. That is how we stayed up in the air.

At that very moment of revelation, the tow plane released the glider, and we must have plummeted one hundred feet. "Daddy!" I cried as the plane eventually settled into a steady glide. "We're fine, kids," Bob said, as we passed through glistening white clouds and brilliant patches of blue.

"Do you see how peaceful and quiet it is up here?" I did. The fear left as abruptly as it came. I didn't care if we ever landed. Eventually we floated downward and landed gently. Bob used to say he could land safely in a tree.

We went back occasionally for cookouts with the Barone family and other gliding patrons on weekends. Good times and happy memories ...



Maria Monroe Whitehead

Reposted from *Hemi-Sync Facebook*. Reprinted with permission of Maria Whitehead.